

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

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P R 222150Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8518

INFO PANCANAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5099

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PN

SUBJECT: NEW RECTOR FOR UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA

1. ROMULO ESCOBAR, RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA RESIGNED THIS MORNING AND WILL BE SUCCEDED BY ELIGIO SALAS, PRESENTLY A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION. ESCOBAR HAS LONG BEEN EXPECTED TO LEAVE THE UNIVERSITY POST, AND HIS RESIGNATION CAME AS NO SURPRISE.

2. ELIGIO ALBERTO SALAS DOMINGUEZ, THE NEW RECTOR, WAS BORN DECEMBER 4, 1941 IN CHITRE, PANAMA. HE GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA WITH A LAW DEGREE IN 1965. HE PRACTICED LAW (AS PARTNER IN LAW FIRM WITH ADOLFO AHUMADA, BASILIO CHONG AND LUIS SHIRLEY) UNTIL APPOINTED ALTERNATE ON SUPERIOR LABOR COURT IN DECEMBER OF 1970. IN 1971 HE WAS APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF STUDENT AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SERVING UNTIL HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION.

3. COMMENT: IN SALAS, TORRIJOS HAS SELECTED A VERY YOUNG MAN AS RECTOR, NO DOUBT WITH AN EYE TO BETTER EMPATHY WITH AND HOPEFULLY CONTROL OF THE STUDENT SITUATION THERE. ALTHOUGH SALAS HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN
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LISTED AS A MEMBER OF THE PDP, HE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED

WITH A SPLINTER GROUP (MADE UP OF EX-PDP MEMBERS) KNOWN
AS THE FRACCION. ROMULO ESCOBAR WILL TAKE UP DUTIES
AS AN ADVISER TO TORRIJOS. AS YET THERE IS NO INDI-
CATION AS TO HOW, OR IF, THIS LATEST CHANGE WILL
AFFECT ESCOBAR'S ROLE AS A TREATY NEGOTIATOR.
JORDEN

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